

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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SUBJECT: U.S. PRESS ON JAKARTA RIOTS

1. FOLLOWING EXCERPTS FROM WEEKEND PRESS ON RIOTS IN
JAKARTA:

WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL, SATURDAY, JANUARY 19: "RIOTS
IN JAKARTA ARE FIRST OVERT AND SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO REGIME
OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO IN THE SEVEN YEARS SINCE HE TOOK
OFFICE. MOREOVER, THERE IS NO REAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN
INDONESIA'S INTERNAL POLITICS AND FOREIGN TRADE ISSUE.
VIOLENT STREET DEMONSTRATIONS PLAY A HIGHLY COMPLICATED
AND SIGNIFICANT PART IN COUNTRIES WHERE THERE IS NO
FORMAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION. THE MOB IS SOMETIMES USED
BY ONE FACTION OR ANOTHER TO EXPRESS INDIRECTLY THE
RESENTMENTS THAT CANNOT BE EXPRESSED ANY OTHER WAY.

THE PUBLIC IN JAKARTA HAS EVIDENTLY COME TO IDENTIFY
FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN AS SOURCE OF MANIFEST CORRUPTION THAT
INFECTS INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT. FOREIGN SCHEMES FOR
INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAVE COME, IN THIS
VIEW, TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR GROSS AND FLAGRANT
DISPARITY BETWEEN GREAT WEALTH OF THE GENERALS AND
POLITICIANS AND WIDESPREAD POVERTY AMONG REST OF
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POPULATION. A MOB THAT IS PUTATIVELY PROTESTING A

STATE VISIT BY BURNING JAPANESE AUTOMOBILES MAY IN FACT

ALSO BE DELIVERING A JUDGMENT ON ITS OWN GOVERNMENT".

2. OBERDOERFER FEATURE IN WASHINGTON POST SUNDAY DESCRIBED BURNING OF PASAR SENIN COMPLEX WITH STRONG EMPHASIS ON DISPARITY BETWEEN OPULENCE OF SHOPS AND POVERTY OF NEIGHBORING SLUM DWELLERS.

3. OTHER COMMENTARY CARRIED BY NEW YORK TIMES AS SUMMARY IN NEWS OF WEEK IN REVIEW: "BUT IT WAS CLEAR IN JAKARTA THAT MORE THAN ANTI-JAPANESE FEELINGS HAD BROUGHT THOUSANDS OF DEMONSTRATORS INTO THE STREETS. THEY WERE ALSO PROTESTING THE POLICIES OF THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT, AND MR. TANAKA'S VISIT GAVE THEM THE EXCUSE TO DO SO..."

"IT IS CONCEDED BY NEARLY EVERYONE, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER, ADAM MALIK, THAT CORRUPTION IS WIDESPREAD IN INDONESIA. THIS, HE SAID, ADDED TO TEMPER OF RAMPAGING YOUNG PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY ARE AGAINST CORRUPTION..."

4. TIMES ALSO CARRIED ANOTHER ARTICLE IN SCHANBERG SERIES FROM WHICH FOLLOWING EXCERPTS DRAWN: "THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OIL CORPORATION RIDES AROUND JAKARTA IN A ROLLS ROYCE "SILVER CLOUD" PASSING BY TAR-PAPER SLUMS WHERE THE MASSES LIVE IN FILTH AND DISEASE, EARNING 25 CENTS A DAY OR LESS...

BUT ON THE SECOND AND LAST DAY OF RIOTS THE MOBS BEGAN OPENLY SHIFTING THEIR ANGER TOWARD WHAT MOST PEOPLE HERE BELIEVE IS THE REAL TARGET OF THE INDONESIANS' DISCONTENT - THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT, WITH ITS PERVASIVE CORRUPTION AND LAVISH LIVING IN HIGH PLACES. THE MALAISE RUNS DEEP, AND THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO WILL HAVE TO PRODUCE VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE RESULTS FOR THE LITTLE MAN IF IT IS TO PROTECT THE FRAGILE MEASURE OF ECONOMIC STABILITY IT HAS BUILT UP IN ITS SEVEN YEARS OF RULE IN THIS, THE FIFTH LARGEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD...

A FEW DAYS AGO, A FOREIGN NEWSMAN ASKED ADAM MALIK, THE UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNTRY'S RESPECTED FOREIGN MINISTER, WHERE CORRUPTION WAS CENTERED IN INDONESIA: "EVERYWHERE", HE REPLIED. KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE HERE SAY THAT THE CORRUPTION NOT ONLY REACHES INTO THE CIRCLE OF GENERALS WHO SURROUND PRESIDENT SUHARTO, BUT EVEN INTO THE PRESIDENT'S FAMILY." KISSINGER

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